



TOWN OF EAST HAMPTON

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EAST HAMPTON TOWN AWARDED SUBSTANTIAL STATE GRANT TO PLAN FOR SUSTAINABLE FUTURE FOR DOWNTOWN MONTAUK

Grant award of \$600,000 will support effort to develop community consensus around proactive measures to reduce coastal area vulnerability, revitalize area to protect tourism industry, economy, and support a resilient year-round community

“Climate change and its attendant effects on sea level rise and increased storm activity is the single greatest threat to the continued well-being of East Hampton and its citizens,” East Hampton Town underscored in its successful grant proposal

The downtown Montauk business district is a critical economic engine for the region, but is located in a low-lying coastal area, with businesses vulnerable to sea level rise, erosion, elevated groundwater, storms, flooding, breaches, and other impacts.

“Coastal erosion, flooding, and sea level rise threaten the beaches and other natural resources that drive the Town’s tourist economy,” according to the project description prepared by the town. “Without a long-term sustainable plan for coastal resiliency, dune enhancement, road infrastructure, and lifeline facilities (power, water, wastewater) enhancements, the existence of central Montauk is threatened. Storm activity coupled with sea level rise, flooding, and major water breaches are projected to erode the land where the only grocery store is located, undermine waterfront motels and cooperatives, contribute to loss of natural features, and cause this economic engine to become an economically depressed area from inaction in the face of a changing climate.”

“I am pleased and very thankful to New York State for recognizing East Hampton’s efforts to address and plan for the inevitable impacts of climate change,” said East Hampton Town Supervisor Peter Van Scoyoc. “As a coastal community, it is crucial for East Hampton to face this challenge head on, proactively planning for a vibrant and sustainable future. Montauk’s constituents and civic groups will play a key role in this upcoming work, and I thank them in advance for their very important participation.”

Under the grant, town Natural Resources and Planning Department staff, in coordination with the town's Waterfront Advisory Committee and local partners, will develop strategies for reducing coastal hazards and climate risk vulnerability, and restoring natural resources, including possible building and zoning code updates, and work to attain public consensus on the plan.

Goals will include maintaining public access to waterfront recreation areas, using natural features to mitigate flooding, avoiding future economic losses due to extreme weather events and other climate change impacts, and facilitating voluntary proactive measures on the part of property owners in order to reduce their risk.

A socio-economic cost-benefit analysis will examine the impacts of implementing code changes versus taking no action.

Public discussion of development and redevelopment options for Montauk will be undertaken, utilizing partnerships with the Montauk Chamber of Commerce and the Nature Conservancy to assist in facilitating public conversation and input and in the formation of a steering committee comprising Montauk residents and property owners along with members of environmental and business organizations.

“Receiving this grant is critical to engaging the community and preparing a plan for coastal resiliency, mitigation, and adaptation to the impacts of the climate crisis,” said East Hampton Town Councilwoman Cate Rogers, the liaison for the initiative.

The resulting plan will augment the town's coastal resiliency planning through the recently completed Coastal Assessment Resiliency Plan, which identified downtown Montauk as a priority “hotspot” in need of mitigation to address the impacts of climate change. The new plan will update East Hampton's adopted and state-approved Local Waterfront Revitalization Plan, or LWRP.

The successful grant application was prepared by East Hampton Natural Resources and Planning Department staff, along with members of the Waterfront Advisory Committee.

The \$600,000 award, a NYS Regional Economic Development Councils grant through the NYS Department of State, is one of 47 such grants for Local Waterfront Revitalization Programs issued statewide, totaling \$16.4 million. East Hampton's award is among some of the largest, and is the highest award of six issued to municipalities on Long Island.

The project is expected to begin in May, 2024, and take approximately 36 months to complete.

Access the NYS Regional Economic Development Councils grant Award Booklet 2023 here:
https://regionalcouncils.ny.gov/sites/default/files/2023-11/REDC_Round_13_Award_Booklet.pdf